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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY AND EDITOR  
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The issuance of this number closes the period for which the present Secretary was elected. It has not been the custom for secretaries of the American Microscopical Society to issue an address to its members thru the pages of the Transactions; nor is it the usage for editors of scientific magazines to do so. There are certain reasons however why it appears to the writer appropriate for him, in the combined capacity of Secretary and Editor, to bring before the Society in this form a statement of the work done during this triennium, and to indicate what seem to be the deductions fairly to be made as the result of the developments of the period.

This has been a time of transition for the Society. Historically, there was a long period in the early history of the Society when there was a successful annual meeting supported by a limited number of enthusiastic microscopists from the country at large and by a considerable number of actual microscopists and well-wishers worked up at or near the place of meeting.

With the inevitable extension of the use of the microscope in all institutions of learning and the specialization of the people using it, there came a period in which the annual meetings dwindled, and could scarcely be called successful from the point of view of even the most optimistic friend of the Society. Even where the attendance was fair, the cleavage of interest between the amateur worker and the professional work became so pronounced as to make the scientific program something of a trial to both.

When the present Secretary assumed the work it soon became apparent that a choice of emphasis must be made. On account of the great distances in our country, because of the diversity in the

specialization of our membership, and because of the great development of the special scientific societies for the promotion of particular realms of work it seemed wise frankly to give up hope of having successful programs of the American Microscopical Society, and to confine the annual meeting to such business routine as is absolutely essential to preserve the integrity of the corporation.

The necessary corollary of this elimination of the scientific meeting, which was formerly one of the chief forms of service rendered by the Society to these members who could attend, was to bring to all members such timely papers, on subjects suited to the general membership of the Society, as the income would allow. All the energy and funds put into holding a meeting were to be put into the publications.

To effect this it was decided to change the form of the Transactions from an annual to a quarterly issue. While the expense of such issue is greater, it was felt that the timeliness would more than compensate for this. It was felt furthermore that a general journal devoted to somewhat broad aspects of microscopic biology, published in the middle west would, for a period at least, serve a real end in science, and might increase the appeal of the Society to the new generation of investigators and teachers. It would furnish a new avenue of periodical publication, and might be made to meet the needs of such groups of biological workers as are least well supplied.

It was urged by some friends of the Society that the Quarterly Transactions undertake to fill some very special field,—as cytology—which is not at the present time occupied by any American publication. Such a course presents many elements of attractiveness. Partly because such narrow specialization would be a complete break with all the traditions of the Society and partly because the Secretary did not feel competent to pilot such a venture, it seemed wiser, however, merely to find a fairly permanent clientage in need of certain things and to undertake to supply this need.

With this task in mind and because of his own experience as a teacher of biology in small colleges, the Secretary was convinced that there would be the least departure demanded from the tradition of the Society to undertake to supply certain features that

would be of practical value to the teacher or student with inadequate journal facilities. Such teachers usually find it necessary to be reasonably familiar with a rather wide range of special interests, and yet do not have access to the publications necessary to secure this familiarity.

In pursuance of this idea it appeared that there are at least three types of contribution that would be of conspicuous value to general students. These are:

*First*—Notes, reviews, abstracts of such special articles as are most valuable from the point of view of the teacher. The purpose is not at all to make these abstracts cover the whole field of biology, but rather to indicate some main lines of progress and to furnish the teacher with illustrations of the progress. Arrangements are now being made to get the help of several biologists to make abstracts of the most suggestive work done in their respective fields.

*Second*—Occasional digests by experts of recent progress in some restricted departments. It was contemplated that these would represent the work of specialists who would bring to the general reader the discussion of the main conclusions and tendencies and prospects within such fields. Several such have appeared. Others are in preparation.

*Third*—It was felt that synopses of some of the more important groups of microscopic and near-microscopic plants and animals, would be of great value to teachers. The thought again is not scientific completeness; but such a treatment of the species more likely to be met by a teacher or his students, together with keys, figures, and descriptions, as would enable identification by the student. It is a fact that we are beginning to recognize that our schools and colleges are neglecting to teach the students to identify and name at least a few of the forms they meet in their work. It is important that every biologist, no matter how narrowly he is specializing, should have some mastery over the classification of the more common animals and plants. From the point of view of the general teacher of biology there is most important pedagogical value in a certain amount of systematic work. These simple descriptions, keys, and figures of the more common species of microscopic organisms are designed to aid the general student and teacher, rather

than the specialist in the department. Quite a number of these have already appeared, as follows: Aquatic Oligochetes, Melanconiales, Rusts, Black Moulds, Powdery Mildews, and Cephaline Gregarines.

Others are arranged for and will appear from time to time until all the more common American forms have been touched upon. The Editor desires to express his appreciation of the help of the scientists who are consenting to do this task. Their prompt and cordial response convinces him that they believe the enterprise worthy.

It has been the purpose to maintain the space given to research articles over as wide a field of microscopic biology as conditions will allow. The flow of manuscripts has not been sufficient to require or enable the editor to have any plan other than to produce an issue of a reasonable size. This has meant that thus far those writers who have availed themselves of our pages have had very prompt publication. As the permanency of the Quarterly becomes manifest this supply will doubtless increase, with a corresponding delay in publication.

By vote of the Executive Committee the Spencer-Tolles Fund now becomes operative in encouraging and aiding investigators. The details of this arrangement may be had by application to Dr. H. B. Ward, Urbana, Ill., who is Chairman of the Committee having the awarding of this grant in hand. Results of investigation conducted under this grant will be published in the Transactions and will add to the value of the journal to members.

During these three years we may fairly say that the Society has prospered in respect to finances and in membership. In the latest list available to the Secretary when he took up the work, there were 226 names of members, and 33 of subscribers. There have been added in these three years 188 members and 36 subscribers. This old list with which we started had not been revised for some years, and thru death and resignations the original list has lost 115 names. Some of these names have been carried for these three years on the rolls with the hope that the members might renew their standing. Some have done so. This year about 65 of the old members' names are finally dropped from the list. During this year 45 members and 25 subscribers have been added. As this

is written we are printing a list of 293 members and of 68 subscribers—a total of 361. This list is almost absolutely a net list of members who are promptly keeping alive their membership. One more year of growth such as we have been having will place the membership at 400. This number will give the Society complete self support and enable the issue each quarter of a magazine of 80 to 100 pages of scientific material.

The Secretary would also call the attention of the Society to the gradual change in the character of the membership. We have lost the memberships, formerly numerous, of amateurs and well wishers brought into the Society thru the special efforts of the members living in and near a place of meeting. Most such members were transient; but among them were many amateur microscopists who meant very much to the life of the Society. This type of member we have not found a way to enlist as formerly. Our great gain has been among teachers. These have come in, one by one, on the recommendation of other teachers. Without doubt they will give us a more stable membership than was true formerly. While we have many physicians as members we have not been able to get hold of physicians thru our physician members as we have in the case of the teachers. This is doubtless due in part to the excellent character of some of the publications now available to physicians in the realm of medico-biological research.

The Secretary feels that the Society owes something still to amateur microscopists in America. Without forgetting any of the difficulties in the way, it would seem possible to conduct a department in which the matters most needed by isolated and incompletely trained students might be developed and dwelt upon. The various methods, devices, short cuts, and so forth, in connection with the discovery, collection, culture, preservation, mounting, and study of microscopic materials might well be brought out. Possibly a brief department of questions and answers might be established for amateur workers. The Secretary has been seeking some one to edit such a department, but as yet without success.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to renew a suggestion made last year in connection with the giving up of the annual scientific program. If successful meetings of general microscopic workers

are to be held, it must be under the auspices of societies of limited area and not by a national body. "It may be pertinent to suggest that, in the opinion of the Secretary, the Microscopical Societies of more local character should be able to carry on successful meetings. These may be state or city societies. There is no reason why really live, valuable meetings for practical discussions and demonstrations cannot be had under these circumstances. The number of people who use the microscope and are interested in its application is greatly increased. There are more indeed in a single city than were found in the whole nation when this society was organized. The A. M. S. stands ready to serve such local societies in any way possible. Indeed it seems as tho an effective division of labor would be: (1) the national society to furnish a magazine of microscopy and microscopic research; and (2) state and city societies to furnish the personal contacts and stimulus thru meetings. Some such broad affiliation of national and local societies ought to be possible, and mutually supportive."